

## An Interview with Dr. Wayne Dyer

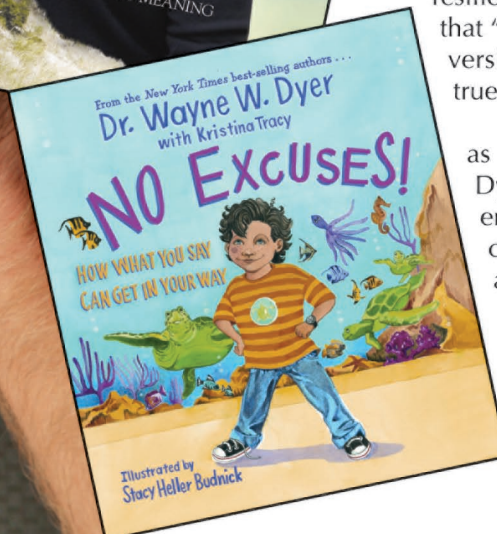
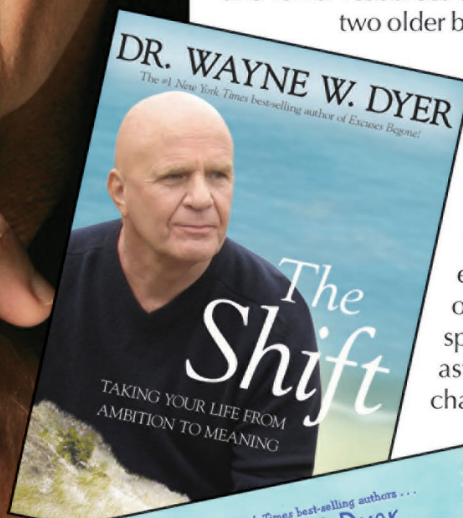
by Karen M. Rider

Those of us who have children—or know people who care for children—have dreams for their development and their future. Many parents wonder (and worry) whether they are capable of providing the guidance necessary for their children to grow up happy, healthy, self-reliant, resilient and confident in themselves and their abilities. Internationally known speaker and best-selling author, Dr. Wayne Dyer assures us: you can guide your children toward becoming compassionate, heart-centered adults who lead fulfilling, ‘no-limit’ lives. Dr. Dyer has created a series of inspirational children’s books based on concepts from his parenting book, *What do You Really Want for Your Children?* and his visionary self-development books for adults, including *Ten Secrets for Success and Inner Peace*, *Excuses Be Gone!*, *The Power of Intention*, and *Change Your Thoughts- Change Your Life*.

The difficulties and challenges of his own childhood made Dr. Dyer a remarkable and unstoppable teacher for adults, and now, children. Dyer’s father was an abusive alcoholic who abandoned his mother and two older brothers. With few options and fewer resources available to her, the children, Wayne and two older brothers, were forced into foster care. Dyer spent the first ten years of his life in and out of Detroit orphanages and foster homes before his mother was able to reunite the family.

Determination and a positive attitude helped Dyer rise above adversity. He completed a tour of duty in the Navy, earned a doctorate in counseling psychology, and authored 30 books on motivation, spirituality and self-empowerment. Dyer’s astounding success is due to his ability to channel lessons he learned on self-reliance, resilience and faith into the message that “anyone of us can overcome adversity to make our dreams come true.”

Though he has achieved fame as the “father of motivation,” Dr. Dyer is most proud of his experiences as a father who has “raised children who all are self-reliant adults.” In this interview, Dr. Dyer shares wisdom and guidance for parents culled from years spent as a psychotherapist, teacher and motivational speaker as well as his life experience as a husband, father of eight, and grandfather of six, children.



**Karen:** Before we talk about the important messages you have for parents and children, tell me about what you learned from a favorite parenting moment.

**Dr. Dyer:** As a father and grandfather, I've been blessed with abundant opportunities to be present with babies. My favorite parenting moment is holding them right out of the womb, cutting the cord, and holding them again. We can learn amazing lessons from observing babies and trying to emulate their joy. You didn't come forth into this world to suffer, to be anxious, fearful, stressful, or depressed. They've done nothing to be so happy. Babies don't work; they have no possessions; they poop in their pants; and they have no goals other than to grow and explore the world. They don't have teeth or hair, and they're pudgy and flatulent. How could they possibly be so joyful and easily pleased? They're in a constant state of love—they're still in harmony with the Source that intended them here. Be like that baby you once were. You don't need a reason to be happy...your desire to be so is sufficient.

**Karen:** What did you learn from your most embarrassing parenting moment?

**Dr. Dyer:** One time, when I was rushing the kids out of the house for school, I raised my voice at my daughter. She replied, "I wonder if all those people would buy a book from Mr. Positive if they saw the way he talks to his 9-year-old daughter?" Kids are very good at showing you your own behavior. What are you modeling to them?

**Karen:** When did a lesson you were trying to teach one of your kids take an unexpected turn?

**Dr. Dyer:** Many times. One of the funniest I can recall happened when my daughter was old enough to complain about how she was being parented. I explained to her that she chose her parents when coming into this world, and if she didn't like the way I parent then she shouldn't have chosen me. She replied, "I chose you? I must have been in a hurry."

**Karen:** I can relate to that. The other day, I heard my daughter mimicking me while she was 'disciplining' her dolls. Unfortunately, she wasn't impersonating one of my better parenting moments. Right away I thought, 'that's not what I want.' So, let's talk about what you believe parents really want for their children.

**Dr. Dyer:** I think parents who are truly aware of themselves, their thoughts and behaviors and the impression these make upon a child, really want something deeper than the material measures of a successful life portrayed in the media. Over the years of being a parent, and having had the opportunity to ask parents this question, the answers gravitated around a central theme that I believe is as relevant today as was when I first wrote the book. Parents want their children to value themselves, to be self-reliant and independent; to take risks; to be free from stress and anxiety; to live peaceful lives; to celebrate present moments; to value wellness and creativity; and to feel a sense of purpose.

**Karen:** Is it realistic?

**Dr. Dyer:** [Parenting is] the toughest job. The fact is most parents don't know how to balance what we truly want for our children and the realities we face each day because we have not learned that simple secret ourselves. With kids, you must live by example. If you yourself have not learned how to cultivate inner happiness that can carry you through adversity, you can't teach that to your children. We want our children to grow into content, high functioning, no-limit adults who can handle life's challenges without getting so overwhelmed by outside forces or their own emotions that they feel defeated. If this is what you really want for your children then there's no excuse why it can't be realistic.

**Karen:** Let's talk about "no-limits" because people are likely to misunderstand this concept when related to child rearing.

**Dr. Dyer:** A no-limit person—child or adult—has no internally imposed limitations and they refuse to allow outsiders to place any limits on them. It's the same

as saying self-actualized, conscious or inner-directed. This is a person who has high levels of self-respect regardless of the situation; they are doers not complainers; they are motivated by higher qualities; they are compassionate and concerned for others; they give to life rather than just seeking out what they can take from life. You can spot a no-limit person easily: They experience joy and inner peace even while everyone around them is going mad. They are the calm within the storm.

**Karen:** What prompted the children's book series?

**Dr. Dyer:** One of the things I most enjoyed as a parent was reading to my kids at bedtime. Sometimes, after we finished reading we would embellish the story with our own ideas. When I started writing books, I had my children in mind. I wanted them to have, in one place, some of the most important practices they could choose to adopt for a fulfilled life. The essential message—to help people overcome self-imposed limitations and realize their own magnificence—is a message for everyone, from infancy to old age. I want children to know just how unique and powerful they are, and that everything they need to create happy, successful lives is within them.

**Karen:** What are some of the lessons taught in these books?

**Dr. Dyer:** Incredible You! uses vivid illustration and rhyming verse to teach ten ways to let your greatness shine through. Some of the lessons are sharing the good in you and seeing the good in others; thinking good thoughts; taking care of your mind and body. Unstoppable Me! teaches no-limit thinking using an example and illustration of how a child might apply the lesson in her life. Both of these books have questions at the end for a parent and child to talk through together.

**Karen: It's Not What You've Got! takes on the biggies: money and abundance. How do you portray these concepts so that children understand and embrace them?**

**Dr. Dyer:** I teach lessons that, given the economic downturn we've faced in recent times, a lot of adults didn't learn. It is crucial for children to learn that money does not create happiness and to live within their means. I also teach that every kind of job is important just as the people who perform them are important. I wrote with Kristina Tracy to create rhyming verse brought to life through illustrations [by Stacy Heller Budnick] that resonate with kids at their level. This, combined with the conversations parents and kids have as they read the book helps them understand, for example, abundance is something more than just money.

**Karen: The latest book, No Excuses!, is one I'm using in my home, now. My daughter is four and she already has all kinds of excuses for why she can't do something. It's even raised memories from my childhood, being told, "You're full of excuses." I try to catch myself and find an appropriate way to respond to the less reasonable excuses she has when I ask her to try a new activity or put away toys.**

**Dr. Dyer:** It's great that you cultivate that awareness with your daughter because you can change the way you respond to her and change the lesson. In turn, she will learn what I hope this book teaches many children: how to spot how often they use excuses and how excuses can stop them from doing things they really want to do. This book, which adapts concepts from the book Excuses Begone!, tells a story of a boy with a seemingly impossible dream who almost lets excuses get in his way. There are questions to explore with your child to promote insight and understanding.

**Karen: What is the best parenting advice you've ever received?**

**Dr. Dyer:** Teach Only Love. It's also the best advice I could give.

*Dr. Wayne Dyer is the author of four children's books, the most recent titled, No Excuses (Hay House). His voice can be heard in the new PIXAR film, DAY & NIGHT, releasing June 18 with Toy Story 3. [www.drwaynedyer.com](http://www.drwaynedyer.com).*